

INSTRUCTIONS



Instructions
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1506/544

CONCERNING



Richard Jones

CONFIRMATION.



L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN RIVINGTON, Bookseller to *The Society for*
promoting Christian Knowledge, at the Bible and Crown
(N^o 62.) in St Paul's Church-yard.

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INSTRUCTIONS, &c.

IT is ordained by the Church, that *so soon as Children are come to a competent Age, and can say their Catechism, they shall be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed; and that none be admitted to the Holy Communion until such Time as he be confirmed, or be ready and desirous to be confirmed.*

To fulfil the Intent and Orders of the Church in this Respect, it is necessary not only that young Persons should be previously instructed in the first Principles of their Religion, contained in the Church Catechism, but that they should likewise have a competent Knowledge of the Nature, End, and Design of *Confirmation*, which they are not likely to have till they come to a competent

John Thomas

Age; but without which their Desire of *Confirmation* cannot be grounded on rational Motives; nor can they hope to receive all the Advantages of this very beneficial Institution.

The few following plain Instructions, duly attended to by them, and inculcated and enlarged upon to them by their Parents, Masters, and Ministers, it is hoped, with the Blessing of God, may give them due Apprehensions in this Respect.

Confirmation is that Rite whereby out Baptismal Covenant, entered into in our Infancy, is ratified and renewed by us, when we come to Years of Discretion, in the Presence of the Church and the chief Pastor of it; by the laying on of whose Hands it is solemnized, together with the Prayers of the Congregation.

This is called *Confirmation* on several Accounts. *First*, On Account of the Part which the Bishop bears in it; by whose Blessing, with the Prayers of the Church, the Persons confirmed may hope to be *strengthened with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and to be defended with GOD's heavenly Grace, that they may continue his for ever*, to whom they are devoted by this solemn Designation.

Secondly, This may be properly called *Confirmation*, from the Nature of the Rite itself, as those who receive it are thereby *confirmed* and established in their Christian Profession: And, as they are *by this Sign certified of GOD's Favour*
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and gracious Goodness towards them, this is moreover an Assurance or Confirmation to them of the Privileges of their Baptism. Agreeably to which this Rite was called, in the primitive Church, *a sealing with the LORD's Seal*, an Expression derived from Scripture, which speaks of new Converts being *sealed with the Holy Spirit*, Eph. i. 13.—iv. 30. *And sealed by GOD's giving the Earnest of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. i. 22. Which Passages, if they do not particularly refer to Confirmation, yet the Application of these Scripture-Terms to it by the primitive Fathers, sufficiently shews their Sense of the Benefits conveyed to Christians by Means of it.

Thirdly, This is called *Confirmation*, from the Part which the Persons confirmed bear in it themselves—For hereby they do, *with their own Mouth and Consent, openly, before the Church, ratify and confirm the solemn Promise and Vow that was made in their Name at their Baptism; acknowledging themselves bound to believe and do all those Things which their God-Fathers and God-mothers then undertook for them.*

So that this Ordinance is not to be looked upon, merely, as the *Act of the Bishop*, conveying his Blessing to the Persons confirmed, in which they have nothing to do but *passively* to receive it, as too many ignorantly imagine; but it should be considered as *their own Act and Deed* likewise; whereby they, by their own free Choice, take upon them their Baptismal Vow, and lay themselves

selves under stricter Obligations to perform it : The End for which this Ordinance was appointed being, to make us, who were baptized in our Infancy, more sensible of the Obligations we are under to believe and do what was then promised for us ; and, in order to impress this Sense the deeper upon our Minds, in our own Persons actually to renew that solemn *Promise and Vow then made in our Name* ; and expressly acknowledge ourselves *bound faithfully to observe such Things, as by our own Confession we have assented unto*. And it is highly reasonable and necessary that they, who being baptized in their Infancy, were not *then* capable of giving any actual Consent of their own to what was charitably done and undertaken for them by others, should, now they are capable, undertake for themselves, and by their own express Act, renew the Vows and Stipulations of their Baptism.

To this End, it is necessary that young Persons be well prepared and instructed in the Nature of their Duty in this Respect. It is necessary, when they come to a proper Age, that *they be taught to know and understand what a solemn Vow, Promise, and Profession they made by their God-Fathers, &c.* when they were baptized ; and they should also be disposed to a sincere Readiness and Desire to ratify and confirm the same in their own Persons.

They, who are in Duty more immediately concerned to see that this be done, next to their
natural

natural Parents, are their God-Fathers and God-Mothers, who had it in Charge, when they answered for them at the Font, *to see that they should be taught, so soon as they should be able to learn, what a solemn Vow, Promise, and Profession they there made by them; as well as all other Things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his Soul's Health.*

They were then charged likewise, after due Instruction in the Principles of their Religion, *to take Care that they should be brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him.* So that nothing can excuse them from the Obligations of this Duty, when they have Power and Opportunity to discharge it.

For these Ends our Church hath prepared a *Catechism, or Form of Instruction, to be learned by Children, and by every Person before he be brought to be confirmed by the Bishop.* And, lest Parents and Sureties should neglect their Duty herein, every Minister is also ordered to instruct and examine them; to lead them by easy Explanations into farther Degrees of Christian Knowledge, the better to prepare them for that more solemn Entrance into Covenant with God, which, upon their own Knowledge and Choice, they make at their *Confirmation.*

To such as come thus duly prepared, and well disposed for the Solemnization of this holy Rite, it undoubtedly conveys great and real

Benefits. The Renewal of their Baptismal Covenant on their Part, they may assuredly hope; will intitle them to a Renewal of it on GOD's Part, who is ever ready to concur with us in every good Work : And, with regard to the present Case, it is implied in the very Notion of a Covenant, that it should be reciprocal. Therefore, by confirming their Baptismal Vow, they have the Privileges of their Baptism confirmed to them.—They have the Benefit of GOD's Grace procured them by the Prayers of the Bishop and Congregation in their Behalf.—And having been previously instructed in the Principles of the Christian Religion, they are engaged to begin betimes, both to consider their Duty, and to apply themselves to the Discharge of it.

To convince all Persons how deserving of their devout Regard this holy Institution is, so that they neither neglect it on the one Hand, nor approach it without due Reverence on the other, they should be made sensible of the high Origin of it, and of the great Esteem in which it hath been always held.—“ That it hath been a solemn, ancient, and laudable Custom in the Church of God, continued from the Apostles' Time, that all Bishops should lay their Hands on Children baptized and instructed in the Catechism of Christian Religion, praying over them, and blessing them *.”—That this holy Action, for the greater Solemnity of it, is reserved to be performed by the Bishop alone.—That it hath the Sanction of
Scripture

* Canon LX.

Scripture as well as Antiquity for its Support, and is grounded on the Practice both of our Saviour CHRIST and his Apostles. For we learn, that our blessed LORD encouraged Children to come to him, and rebuked those that would have kept them from him; and that *he laid his Hands upon them, and blessed them*, Mark x. 16. And when *Philip* had baptized the People of *Samaria*, *the Apostles which were at Jerusalem sent unto them Peter and John, who laid their Hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost*, Acts viii. 14, 17. So likewise, when the Disciples, whom *Paul* found at *Ephesus*, had been baptized in the Name of the Lord *Jesus*, *he laid his Hands upon them, and the Holy Ghost came on them*, Chap. xix. 6. And *the laying on of Hands* is reckoned among those Principles of the Doctrine of CHRIST, from which his Disciples may go on unto *Perfection*, Heb. vi. 1.

Thus we see the laying on of the Apostles' Hands was attended with no less Consequence than the Descent of the Holy Ghost. And though it is not from hence pretended that the Bishops have any inherent Power of conferring the Holy Ghost; for neither had the Apostles themselves in Reality any such, as it was God who gave the Spirit to those on whom they laid their Hands: Yet we may humbly hope, that by the fervent Prayers of the Bishop and Church, accompanying this very solemn and significant Ceremony, they, on whom he lays his Hands shall in like Manner, receive the Graces of the Holy

Holy Spirit, if they do but worthily prepare themselves for that Purpose. For we have a Promise of God on which to build such a Hope, CHRIST having declared, that God will give *the Holy Spirit to them that ask him*: We have therefore more Reason to hope that he will give him, when he is so earnestly and solemnly asked of him by the Pastors of his Church, whom he hath appointed not only to pray for, but to bless his People.

It is a Custom too prevalent in some Places, for People to press to be confirmed, who have received *Confirmation*, perhaps, several Times before; but this proceeds from their not considering what *Confirmation* means. As there is but one Baptism, so there is required but one solemn Ratification or *Confirmation* of it. No Christian therefore needs, or indeed ought, to desire to be confirmed oftener than once.

This is what seems most necessary to be known by young Persons, before they come to be confirmed, in order to render this *a reasonable Service*. Having received *Confirmation*, under such a due Sense of it, it is to be hoped they will pay a greater Regard to the Obligations under which it lays them; and as this is a good Means of preserving their Innocence, and training them up in an early Piety, the Advantages of which are inestimable, they will be the more likely from thenceforward to grow in Grace;—to become worthy and frequent Partakers of the holy Com-

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munion ;—to hold fast the Profession of their Faith ;—and to persevere in the constant Practice of Virtue and Religion to the End of their Days.

A PRAYER to be used frequently before
CONFIRMATION.

ALmighty God and most merciful Father, who hast vouchsafed to receive me for thine own Child by Adoption, and to incorporate me into thy holy Church, and hast called me to the Knowledge of thy Grace, and Faith in thee ; increase this Knowledge, and confirm this Faith in me evermore : Give me such a due Sense of the Vows and Privileges of my Baptism, that I may be willing and desirous to renew and confirm those Vows in my own Name, and may be confirmed in my Title to those ineffable Privileges through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. *Amen.*

A PRAYER to be added to our daily Devotions after
CONFIRMATION, *at least till such Time as we receive the Holy Communion.*

O Most gracious and blessed LORD GOD, who art the Author and Finisher of every good Work, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy ; I most humbly beseech thee, that as I have been dedicated to thee by Baptism, and have since devoted myself to the Obedience of thy Laws, by those solemn Engagements which I have lately renewed and made before thee and thy Church at my *Confirmation* ; vouchsafe me the Assistance of thy Grace and
Holy

Holy Spirit, to enable me to persevere in a Christian Course of Life, and to perform the Vows and Resolutions which I have made to serve and obey thee. To this end, defend me, O LORD, with thy heavenly Grace and Benediction, that I may continue thine for ever, and daily increase in thy Holy Spirit more and more, until I come unto thine everlasting kingdom: And let thy fatherly Hand, I beseech thee, ever be over me; let thy Holy Spirit be ever with me; and so lead me in the Knowledge and Obedience of thy Word, that in the End I may obtain everlasting Life, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.



F I N I S.

Evan Jones's hand



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